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Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 03186 131938Z

42
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PBOR, ENRG, DA, FO
SUBJECT: FAEROESE ELECTION RESULTS

REF A. COPENHAGEN 2081 B. COPENHAGEN 3087 C. COPENHAGEN 2102

1. THE NOV 7 FAEROESE ELECTION RESULTED IN THE VIRTUAL REINFORCEMENT OF THE STATUS QUO. THE THREE PARTIES CONSTITUTING THE PRESENT COALITION GOVERNMENT (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, UNIONIST (COOPERATION) PARTY AND OLD HOME-RULE PARTY) MAINTAINED THEIR 14 SEATS IN THE 26-SEAT LAGTING. THE ONLY CHANGE WAS A ONE-SEAT INCREASE FOR THE HOLD HOME-RULE PARTY, WITH A CORRESPONDING LOSS FOR THE UNIONIST PARTY. THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES (REPUBLICAN PARTY, PEOPLES PARTY AND PROGRESS PARTY), ALL OF WHICH FAVOR IN VARYING DEGREES GREATER AUTONOMY VIS-A-VIS DENMARK, RETAINED THEIR RESPECTIVE SEATS, WITHOUT CHANGE. PARTICIPATION WAS
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AN UNUSUALLY HIGH 80.3 PER CENT OF THE ELECTORATE,

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POSSIBLY STIMULATED BY THE FACT THAT 20-YEAR OLDS WERE
ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

2. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WAS ONE OF THE DULLEST IN POST-
WAR YEARS. THE ISSUE OF FAEROESE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
EC (REFTEL A) NEVER CAUGHT FIRE. SEPARATIST SENTIMENT,
WHICH THE REPUBLICAN LEADER ERLENDUR PATURSSON TRIED TO
WHIP UP, HAD APPARENTLY ONLY LIMITED APPEAL. THE ISSUE
WITH MOST SUBSTANCE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE EXPLOITATION OF
FAEROESE NATURAL RESOURCES. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES PRO-
JECTED AN IMAGE OF VIGOROUS AND EXTREME DEMANDEURS,
BOTH WITH RESPECT TO OIL RIGHTS ON THE SURROUNDING SHELF
(REFTEL B) AND TO FISHERY LIMITS.

3. ALTHOUGH THE BASIC POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE LAGTING
REMAIN UNCHANGED, THE POPULAR VOTE RESULTS WERE DISAPPOINTING
TO THE GOVERNING COALITION. THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICANS' SMALL NET
GAIN, DESPITE A FACTIONAL CONFLICT IN THORSHAVN, INDICATES
THAT THEY DREW A LARGE SHARE OF THE 20-YEAR-OLD VOTE AND
CONTINUE TO APPEAL TO AN INCREASING PERCENTAGE OF THE
TOTAL ELECTORATE.

4. INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS WILL COMMENCE NEXT WEEK FOR
THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. THE SUCCESS OF THE TWO
MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTIES, THE REPUBLICANS AND THE
PEOPLES PARTY, AND OF THE SMALL OLD HOME-RULE PARTY
IN INCREASING THEIR POPULAR VOTE HAS RAISED THE POSSIBILITY
THAT THE THREE WINNING PARTIES MIGHT RE-CREATE
THE NATIONALIST COALITION WHICH WAS IN POWER FROM 1962-66.
WITH ITS TWO SEATS, HOWEVER, THE OLD HOME-RULE PARTY (WHICH HAS
BECOME VERY MODERATE ON THE HOME RULE ISSUE) WILL HAVE A POWERFUL
SWING-WEIGHT POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. SINCE THAT PARTY
DECLINED DURING THE NATIONALIST COALITION PERIOD AND HAS PROSPERED
SINCE, THE PROBABLE OUTCOME OF THE COMING TALKS IS
THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CURRENT COALITION.
THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE SOME WEEKS WITH THE
NEW GOVERNMENT BEING INSTALLED IN LATE DECEMBER.
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